

IRTS Radio News Bulletin Sunday December 14th 2003

South Dublin Radio Club

South Dublin Radio Club recently held a photo competition among its members. 70 photos in all were entered. The competition categories included a number of amateur radio related pictures. The winners were announced on Tuesday 9th of December last. Brian Cusack EI7FB, one of the founders of SDR, who is a professional photographer, judged the contest. In announcing the winners, Brian made the point that some of the winning entries were well up to professional standards.

The first prize went to Charlie EI7HG, with his "UFO Footprint" photo taken on Banna Strand. Other prizewinners were Kyle EI2JO (one of his pictures is a most unusual close-up of a printed circuit board), Jim GI0BJH, Mark EI9IB, Alan GI6IXD and Tom EI7HT. All of the winning pictures can be seen on the club's web site at www.qsl.net/ei2sdr/ and are well worth viewing.

SDRs final meeting of the year is its Christmas Party in the Templeogue Inn on Tuesday next, 16th December at 8.00 p.m. As previously reported, the highlight of the night will be the announcement of the SDR Autumn Challenge Winners. As the Challenge was hotly contested this year, there is considerable interest in the result.

Cork Radio Club

Cork Radio club will have their annual Christmas get together in Wilton Park House on Monday the 15th of December at 9 p.m. Members and non members alike are all welcome.

In January, Cork Radio Club will commence their club project. This Year it was decided to construct an 80 metre 500mW CW transmitter. The transmitter consists of just 15 components. The club plan to use the transmitter later in the Year in a local DF hunt. Anyone interested in electronic construction is welcome to attend the club meetings on Monday evenings about 8.30 p.m.

The postponed talk on GMDSS (Global Marine and Distress System) will take place next January.

Cork Radio Club would like to wish all radio amateurs & SWL's a merry Christmas

and a happy New Year.

Morse Code

Although the 2003 World Radiocommunications Conference (WRC-03) recently eliminated the Morse code requirement for amateur/experimenter access to the HF spectrum the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) hasn't forgotten Morse code completely. In Geneva on December the 5th last, the ITU Radiocommunications Sector agreed on the wording of a new Draft Recommendation that specifies the international Morse code character set and transmission procedures. It also includes a new Morse code character to cover the "@" (at) symbol which is used in e-mail addresses.

UK 4 & 6 Metres

The 23rd of December will see the 50 MHz UK Activity Contest from 20:00 to 22:30 hrs. UTC.

The RSGB will hold 4m activity evenings throughout 2004. The 2004 dates will be the 30th of March, the 31st of August and the 30th of November.

AREN

A twenty-four hour AREN watch was successfully completed on December the 6th and 7th last.

Between 1200 hrs on December the 6th and 1200 hrs on December the 7th a HF watch was maintained in order to help prepare members for a possible power failure such as those experienced recently in the US and in the United Kingdom. The aims of the exercise were to: (a) Operate without mains power. (b) Have members available on watch & ready for activation during a sustained standby period. (c) Maintain discipline by checking in to the stand by group when available and checking out before leaving. (d) Maintain discipline by operating a silent watch. (e) Share responsibility for co-ordinating a watch. (f) Implement a signal report system that is unfamiliar. (g) Politely and firmly maintain control of a working frequency for the duration of the exercise.

The members of the group demonstrated a keen and effective will to efficiently operate such a service and the primary HF frequency of 3.660 MHz was manned for

the duration of the watch period. Each watch was covered by a backup member, who stood by on both the operational HF frequency and on 144.775 MHz.

Operators who wish to serve their communities in this way are invited to join the network. There are no special requirements other than functioning gear and training will be provided. Contact John Ketch, EI2GN, on ketch@indigo.ie, or phone 021-432-3283. John can also be contacted via the IRTS.

Space News

Charlie G3WDG in the UK has received a signal from the European Space Agency's Mars Express spacecraft. The craft, now in deep space is expected to reach Mars on Christmas Day and deploy its Beagle 2 lander. G3WDG reports that he heard the Mars Express signal on X band (8.4 GHz) on December the 9th last using a 3 metre dish. He said that signals very consistent for about two hours. In November, a team of German amateurs were able to copy the Mars Express signal from Bochum, Germany the group were equipped with a 20 metre parabolic antenna. More information is available on the AMSAT-DL web site.

Staying with space news. Amateur radio in space has reached a new milestone with the successful installation and testing of the new dual-band transceiver in the ISS Zvezda Service Module. ISS Expedition 8 Commander Mike Foale, KB5UAC, set up the new transceiver at NA1SS this recently. The "Phase 2" ARISS equipment could soon be on the air.

Tipperary Amateur Radio Group

Please note that there will be no monthly meeting in December, and from the New Year all future monthly meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of each month.

South Eastern Amateur Radio Group

There will be no general meeting for the month of December. However, there will be an informal social gathering on Friday the 19th of December at 8.30 p.m. in the Mansion House, Johns Street, Waterford. All are welcome.

For latest information and news about the club, visit the clubs website at www.searg.com or e-mail info@searg.com.

DX News

The use of the AX prefix by all VK amateurs is approved for the duration of Australia Day, which happens on the 26th of January 2004.

Items for inclusion in next weeks Radio News should be forwarded Mark Wall EI7IS. He can be contacted on 087-6302026 or e-mail cyberis@vodafone.ie. News can also be submitted via e-mail to news@irts.ie for automatic forwarding to both the radio and printed news services.

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